

As gas prices continue to rise, many Northern Californians are watching with worried memories of the painfully-high energy prices we experienced just a few years ago. While the democratic uprising in Libya, a top 20 oil-producing country, has yet to produce an actual shortage in global oil production, it has again exposed a systemic problem with our dependency on foreign oil—the price of oil is being driven to over \$100 per barrel simply due to the concern that unrest abroad could spread to other major oil producers and cause a substantial supply disruption. Despite this situation, the Administration has failed to take any tangible action to increase domestic energy production and help shield our nation from the higher prices at the pump that are now virtually certain when our foreign energy supply becomes at risk.

The sharp rise in oil prices of 2008 placed a significant strain on our economy that was already saddled with a faltering housing market and facing the beginnings of a recession. As we move to recover from the most serious economic downturn since the Great Depression, we need to be doing all we can to maintain stable energy prices and continue economic growth. Unfortunately, the only response we have seen thus far from President Obama and Congressional Democrats to surging oil prices has been: 1) two separate attempts to increase taxes on U.S. oil and gas producers, and 2) calls to release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). The flaw with the first “solution” is that increasing taxes on such companies will only serve to deter exploration and production of our onshore and offshore oil and gas resources—a situation that has been exacerbated by the Department of the Interior’s failure to approve new permits for oil and gas drilling. The flaw with the second approach is that experts agree that the SPR should remain under its intended purpose of insulating against brief emergency supply shocks, which again we haven’t experienced. At the core of the Administration’s response is a belief that energy prices should be significantly higher (as [mentioned](#) by President Obama in his 2008 campaign) because it advances their cap and trade agenda. As a result, the President has [continually opposed](#) increasing domestic production since he took office.

With that said, the call to release oil from the SPR does highlight the need for increased American-made energy to bring longer-term stability to our oil supply. The U.S. continues to import 66% of its oil—at a cost of over \$300 billion each year—even though we have vast oil reserves located right in our own backyard. In total, our onshore and offshore oil resources amount to an energy source that could power the United States for over a century. Yet, President Obama and his allies continue doing all they can to oppose production of these resources. I believe their steadfast opposition is unacceptable and will continue to support efforts in Congress to reduce our dependency on foreign oil by allowing American oil producers to further tap our nation’s rich energy resources.

